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U. S. Department of AgricultureSuggestions to aid in the post-flood clean-up

A radio talk by Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, broadcast Wednesday, February 10, 1937, in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, by 57 stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company.

MR. SALISBURY: Now for our weekly report on home economics news given by your friend, Ruth Van Deman.

And let me add just a word of explanation about Miss Van Deman's absence from the air last week. I'm exceedingly sorry, as I know many of the women in this audience are when we have to cancel one of these home economics talks. But radio schedules are like train schedules - subject to change without notice. Whenever you run a special, the regular schedule is likely to be knocked galley west. But I can guarantee, well almost guarantee, that nothing will upset your Household Calendar schedule the rest of February.

MISS VAN DEMAN: All right, Morse. And I won't sue you for breach of guarantee. As a matter of fact, last week I was just as glad not to come up here to broadcast. I was working against a dead line, getting some material ready for the pamphlet on "First Aid for Flooded Homes and Farms." Every bureau in the Department was asked to contribute any practical suggestions it had, to help people with the job of reconditioning their homes after the flood waters subside.

MR. SALISBURY: Doesn't the Red Cross have first-hand data on that?

MISS VAN DEMAN: It seems not. The request came from the Red Cross and the extension folks in the flood-stricken States.

So, we all pitched in and whipped into shape all the material that might have any bearing. And a 16-page bulletin was printed in one day and is on its way to the Red Cross workers and the county agents in all the flooded States.

But we feel exceedingly humble about these few suggestions that we can give. We know that it's a long, discouraging back-breaking job to clean up houses and furnishings that have been soaked for days and weeks in muddy water. It must be heart breaking to come back to a home and find all your cherished possessions covered with sticky mud and polluted water. We realize that any suggestions that we can offer from this distance are bound to be very, very slight in comparison with such calamity.

The papers these days have had some wonderful stories of the ways people outside the flood districts have turned to aid those in distress - with money and gifts of every kind. For instance, there have come to my desk day by day reports of what the New York State Farm Bureaus have done. There were dreadful floods in New York State in the summer of '35, you remember. So when news of this disaster came, the farmers and homemakers up there knew what it meant. And they went into their cellars and storehouses and brought out potatoes and

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onions and beans, and eggs and canned vegetables and fruits and meats. One county even contributed 30 gallons of maple sirup. In all they have sent over 60 carloads of food and clothing. The extension services in all the other States touching the flood zone have done the good-neighbor act, too, I know, but I just haven't happened to see their detailed reports.

Then the Government, as you know, has sent in quantities of canned meat and dried skim milk and grapefruit juice, and eggs, and other foods.

Again I don't want to be seeming to offer something very small in the face of a terrific situation. But I expect there will be families who have never before encountered milk in the form of a dry white powder. It's an exceedingly nutritious food, and easy to use if you know how. If any of you listening today hear of anyone who wants directions for using dried skim milk, I wish you'd let me know. When some of the relief agencies began to distribute dried skim milk 3 years ago, we worked out directions and simple recipes to go with the packages.

Dried skim milk contains practically all the food values of whole fresh milk except those associated with the fat. It's very rich in calcium and protein. You can put it into cooked cereal, or mashed potatoes, or bread or biscuits or cornbread, and it adds a lot to the food value. Or you can mix it with water - reconstitute it as the technical phrase is - and use it as milk to drink or in making soup or cocoa.

Then on canned meat. People have asked us for quick, easily prepared dishes using canned meat. So we worked up a sheet with eleven good ways of using canned meat in appetizing hot dishes - such as hot hamburger and onion sandwich, meat stews with dumplings, and tamale pie.

And speaking of canned meat reminds me. We are answering your letters asking about the meat canning bulletin just as fast as we can handle them. But after we put in the mailing orders it takes a few days more to get the envelopes filled and mailed. But just give us time, we'll get them to you. If you were to telephone me about your order, I'd probably answer as the taxicab offices always do when you call a cab and it doesn't come, and you call them again and demand to know what's the matter. Invariably the answer is: "Don't worry madam. Your cab is on the way."

And this will have to be all for us today, but as Mr. Salisbury said the Household Calendar will be coming to you again next week.

MR. SALISBURY: But on Tuesday of next week if our present schedule holds.